

Minister welcomes faith groups' role in tackling drugs

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Drugs Minister Paul Goggins will today look at the innovative ways London's faith groups are tackling drug issues within their communities at a special conference organised by the Home Office and the Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance (GLADA).

The event brings together London's many faith communities to explore how they can engage with and support people experiencing drug and alcohol problems, but who may be reluctant to come forward for fear of discrediting their community or being rejected.

The conference is part of a series of regional events over a nine month period to enable Paul Goggins to see what is being achieved in tackling drugs - and what more needs to be done.

Paul Goggins said: "We recognise that real progress is being made in tackling drugs at local level and that faith-based organisations often play a vital role in this.

"We know that some faith-led groups are working extremely effectively with drug users, and are helping to raise awareness of the issues in their communities.

"I am impressed by the ways in which faith groups are addressing this difficult and complex issue, and encouraged by the difference they are making.

"Today's event is about raising awareness of the good work that is being done in London by these groups, and to explore how a faith-led approach can help them to better engage with vulnerable members of their communities and help reduce drug-related harm".

The conference will hear from a number of organisations working with people with drug problems including The Street Pastors, who work in several London boroughs, EACH; which offers a counselling service in a number of languages; and nafas, a drugs project that works in the Bangladeshi community.

The Minister has already visited Salford, Gloucester, Portsmouth and Peterborough to see how drugs services are being delivered across the country. He will go on to visit Gateshead, Hull, Coventry, Derby and Barking and Dagenham later this year.

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